



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**April 29, 2010**

**REQUEST:** Clifton Park Master Plan

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval and Adoption

**STAFF:** William Doane, Jr.

**PETITIONERS:** Department of Recreation and Parks

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council – Department of Recreation and Parks.

#### **SITE/ GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: Clifton Park is located at 2801 Harford Road and its 260 acres make it one of the largest parks in the city and a significant asset to Baltimore's network of public parks. An additional 50 acres of land developed as public schools and their grounds make the Park seem even larger. The park is bounded by Harford Road, Belair Road, Erdman Avenue, and Sinclair Lane. The site includes the historic Clifton Mansion, Valve House, Gardener's Cottage, and others historic structures. About half of Clifton Park's acreage is reserved for a public 18-hole golf course and a "First Tee" youth golf teaching facility at the north end of the Park. Historically about 37 acres have been set aside for athletic fields, tennis courts, and the swimming pool.

General Area: The Park lies in between several neighborhoods. South Clifton Park and Darley Park border the south side, to the north is Mayfield, to the east is Belair Edison, and to the west Coldstream Homestead Montebello.

#### **HISTORY**

The area now known as Clifton Park was used for farming in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The area was then used as part of Johns Hopkins estate in the mid- to late- nineteenth century, during which time the Clifton mansion and Gardener's Cottage were built. The valve house and drinking water reservoir were constructed in 1887, followed by the band shell in 1910 and later that decade the golf-course and swimming pool. In the 1960's the reservoir was filled in and Lake Clifton School was built on top. Historic preservation efforts began in the 1970's and continue to this day.

#### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The request conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically PLAY Goal 3, Objective 1: Maintain a Well-managed System of Parks and Open Spaces. The request conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore Sustainability

Plan, specifically GREENING Goal 3: Provide safe, well-maintained public recreational space within ¼ mile of all residents. The request also conforms to the goals and objectives of the Coldstream Homestead Montebello Community Area Master Plan.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Department of Recreation and Parks has been systematically developing master plans for each of their major parks. The purpose of these plans is to provide long-range guidance for project implementation in the park. They have completed plans for Druid Hill, Patterson, Wyman, Farring Baybrook, and Carroll Parks and are currently working on the Herring Run.

This Master Plan studies how the physical plan of Clifton Park can reflect and facilitate its mission and fulfill related community needs. It studies the Park's immediate and long-term physical, programming, and historic preservation needs. The final product is a road map that guides immediate renovations and additions to grounds, buildings, and infrastructure, as well as anticipated long-term park needs.

The Department of Recreation and Parks worked with a consultant, Ayers Saint Gross, on the master planning process. The process included a series of public meetings, focus groups, park walk-throughs, and other efforts to facilitate participation from stakeholder groups and individual park neighbors and to encourage input from community members that have not been recent park users. Since Clifton Park is an amenity to multiple neighborhoods, schools, and other institutions, the resulting Master Plan is a consensus-based, practical one.

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places (2007) codifies the importance of Clifton Park and provides an exhaustive documentation of the numerous historic resources located in the Park. The Clifton Mansion is a Baltimore City Historic Landmark. The plan was reviewed and approved by the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks Advisory Board and by the Baltimore Commission of Historical and Architectural Preservation.

Recommendations are based on viewing the park as four emergent zones:

- Mother's Garden: restoration and possible collaboration with supportive non-profits
- Golf Course Area: ornamental fencing, additional tree-plantings, periodic evaluations of operations
- Cultural Grounds: a new plaza and walking paths to connect the restored Clifton Mansion, Valve House, and Band Shell
- Active Recreation Area: reconfiguring and upgrading facilities, including ball fields and the swimming pool

It is staff's findings that the 2010 Clifton Park Master Plan supports the preservation of Clifton Mansion, Valve House, and the Band Stand and the immediate surroundings in the cultural grounds, better accommodation of current park uses by reconfiguring and upgrading facilities (including studying a realignment of St. Lo Drive), and continued work with stakeholders to encourage use and enjoyment of the park. Thus staff recommends the approval of the 2010 Clifton Park Master Plan by the Planning Commission.

Copies of the 2010 Clifton Park Master Plan will be available at the Department of Recreation and Parks website.

Staff has notified Friends of Clifton Park, Darley Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, New South Clifton Park Community Association, Coldstream Homestead Montebello Community Development Corporation, Belair Edison Community Association, Mayfield Improvement Association, Civic Works, and City Council Representative of this action.

**Thomas J. Stosur,  
Director**

THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
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BALTIMORE, MD 21202

CLIFTON PARK MASTER PLAN ADOPTION

April 30, 2010

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

This is to inform you that on April 29, 2010 the Planning Commission approved the Master Plan for the Clifton Park Adoption. Copies of the staff report and the Clifton Park Master Plan are attached.

Therefore, I respectfully submit this duly adopted the Clifton Park Master Plan to the Honorable City Council for review and consideration.

If you have any questions please contact Mr. Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief of Land Use and Urban Design, (410) 396-4488.

TJS/WYA/ttl

Attachments

CC: The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor  
The Honorable James B. Kraft, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
The Honorable Nicholas D'Adamo Jr., 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
The Honorable Robert Curran, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
The Honorable Bill Henry, City Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
The Honorable Sharon Green Middleton, 6<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Belinda Conaway, 7<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Helen Holton, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Agnes Welch, 9<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Edward Reisinger, 10<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable William Cole, 11<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable , 12<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Warren Branch, 13<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Mary Pat Clarke, 14<sup>th</sup> District

Mr. Andrew Frank, Deputy Mayor  
Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor's Office  
Ms. Sophie Dagenais, Chief of Staff  
Ms. Jennifer Coates, Councilmanic Service  
  , Law Department